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**Advantages and Disadvantages of Proportional Representation**

Proportional representation is used to talk about electing systems in which different parties in parliament gain seats in proportion to the number of votes they gain. Proportional representation is used a lot in Western democracies such as Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and the USA etc. because it better shows the percentage of each party in parliament. An example of how it works is this; if there are 10 seats and the Republicans win 30% of the votes they will get 3 seats within the parliament. One example of proportional representation is STV or the single transferable vote. This is when voters are given a ballot with the names of the candidates on it. Next to the names of the candidates are boxes. In these boxes you must rank which candidate you like best, which you like the least and the ones in between. For example, if there are 4 candidates and you like candidate “Bill” best you would put the number 1 next to Bill’s name, then a number 2 next to the candidate you like second best and so on. The votes are counted in a special machine. The candidates much reach a certain number in order to be elected.

d’Hondt is a form of part list proportional representation. It is when the number of votes won by each party is divided by 1, then by 2 etc. The party that, when the votes are divided has the most number of votes gets that amount of seats. For example, if a party has 4 of the highest votes, then they get 4 seats.

Advantages to Proportional Representation:

* It shows a clearer picture of how many people voted for each party.
* It shows the minority much clearer and fairer.
* The voters have more choice in who is elected.
* Almost everyone who runs is shown in parliament, even if they only receive one percent of votes.
* This way of voting is cheaper because everyone is given the same voting ballot.
* People tend to vote when they think that their vote will be heard/ count. In proportional representation the people’s vote is represented which supports democratic voting.

Disadvantages to Proportional Representation:

* In methods such as the STV method, it requires more thought and knowledge about the party that is being voted for. Therefore, more people might not want to participate, causing less votes to come.
* Coalitions are often formed and this can lead to arguments between the parties. Therefore it can create a weak government because the parties are fighting and not agreeing on laws etc.
* Independent parties / candidates are not shown properly. If one person is running by himself or herself and they receive 85% of the votes, it is not possible to give them 85% of the seats. They are only one person.
* In the d’Hondt system voters can only vote for a party in general and not a person. If they only want one of the people in that party to make it into power, they will have to vote for the entire party and are not able to just vote for one person.

References:

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